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EXAMINER

CHEA, PHILIP J

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2153

DATE MAILED: 05/06/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/068,944

Applicant(s)

MARUYAMA ET AL.

Examiner

Philip J. Chea

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 February 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 11 February 2002 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 5/1/02.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-15 have been examined.

Priority

1. Acknowledgment is made of applicant's claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d). The certified copy has been filed in parent Application No. Japan 2001-268973, filed on 9/5/01.

Information Disclosure Statement

2. The information disclosure statement (IDS) submitted on 5/1/02 was filed. The submission is in compliance with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97. Accordingly, the information disclosure statement is being considered by the examiner.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1,2,4,5,6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ouchi (US 5,978,836), and further in view of Johnson et al. (US 5,325,310), herein referred to as Johnson, and in view of Creswell et al. (US 6,775,690), herein referred to as Creswell.

As per claims 1 and 2, Ouchi discloses a document management system, as claimed, comprising:

- a database which stores information about departments of an organization, information about users in the organization, and information about documents (see column 18, lines 10-40);

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- mailing means for sending an e-mail to any of the departments or any of the users in the organization (see column 18, lines 40-66);
- document registration means which makes a preliminary registration of information about a document on the database, asks the user by using the mailing means for approval of the document under the preliminary registration (see column 7, lines 18-27, where a document is submitted and potentially approved by a manager), and registers a data of the approval given by the user on the database, thereby formally registering the document (see Fig 9, MOVE HISTORY TABLE, where the date is registered upon reception of a document);
- delivery management means which notifies the department of formal registration of the document and requests a reception confirmation of the notification, using the mailing means (see column 9, lines 28-35), and registers reception or non-reception of the reception confirmation on the database (see Fig. 9, MOVE HISTORY TABLE);
- [Claim 2] search and retrieve means for searching for and reading of a document registered via a network (see column 17, lines 5-28, where a document can be later retrieved for a status report);
- [Claim 2] master management means for updating the information about the departments of the organization and the information about the users in the organization (see column 18, lines 10-60).

Although the system disclosed by Ouchi shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to disclose tutorial management means which instructs the user to read document registered and requests a read-through report, using the mailing means, and registers reception or non-reception of the read-through report on the database.

Nonetheless, these features are well known in the art and would have been an obvious modification of the system disclosed by Ouchi, as evidenced by Johnson.

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In an analogous art, Johnson discloses a mail delivery system for processing mail messages that require the recipient to read through the message and acknowledges the message reception (see columns 3 and 4, lines 64-67 and 1-24).

Given the teaching of Johnson, a person having ordinary skill in the art would have readily recognized the desirability and advantages of modifying Ouchi by employing a user to read an email document, such as disclosed by Johnson, in order to require employees to acknowledge critical messages that require a reply or confirmation.

In considering the reception or non-reception, given the teaching of Ouchi above for tracking the document reception (see Fig. 9), it would have been obvious to incorporate the read-through report in the database.

Although the system disclosed by Ouchi in view of Johnson shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to disclose deadline management means which reminds the department or the user, using the mailing means, if the reception confirmation or the read-through report is not received within a period of time.

Nonetheless, these features are well known in the art and would have been an obvious modification of the system disclosed by Ouchi in view of Johnson, as evidenced by Creswell.

In an analogous art, Creswell discloses a mail delivery system for processing mail messages and reminding a recipient of a mail message that requires acknowledgment by sending another message to the recipient (see column 4, lines 3-55).

Given the teaching of Creswell, a person having ordinary skill in the art would have readily recognized the desirability and advantages of modifying Ouchi in view of Johnson by employing a reminder if the reception confirmation is not received within a predetermined period of time, such as disclosed by Creswell, in order to remind a recipient that a response or acknowledgment is required for a critical email message.

As per claim 4, Ouchi in view of Johnson in view of Creswell further disclose a conversion means for converting a paper document into electronic data so that the converted electronic data is registered on the database as the document (see Johnson column 4, lines 14-28).

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As per claim 5, Ouchi in view of Johnson in view of Creswell further disclose an electronic approval means for electronically obtaining an approval so that the approval by the user of the preliminary registered document is obtained electronically (see Ouchi column 7, lines 18-27, where a document is submitted and potentially approved by a manager).

As per claim 6, Ouchi in view of Johnson in view of Creswell further disclose that a request for the approval of the preliminary registered document through the mailing means and an approval through the electronic approval means are obtained sequentially from a plurality of users (see Ouchi column 7, lines 18-27, where a document is submitted from a user and potentially approved by a manager then sent off to the finance department).

5. Claims 7,8,13,14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ouchi in view of Johnson in view of Creswell as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Kao et al. (US 6,070,177), herein referred to as Kao.

As per claim 7, although the system disclosed by Ouchi in view of Johnson in view of Creswell shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to disclose that a progress in obtaining the approvals is determined based on presence or absence of each approval date on the database as shown to users via a network.

Nonetheless, these features are well known in the art and would have been an obvious modification of the system disclosed by Ouchi in view of Johnson in view of Creswell, as evidenced by Kao.

In an analogous art, Kao discloses a document transmission system, which allows for a document to be distributed among a network of computers keeping track of the transmission and revision history, further showing a progress in obtaining approvals based on presence or absence of each approval date on the database and shown to users via a network (see Fig. 4).

Given the teaching of Kao, a person having ordinary skill in the art would have readily recognized the desirability and advantages of modifying Ouchi in view of Johnson in view of Creswell by showing a presence or absence of an approval date to notify users on a network of an approval, such as disclosed

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by Kao, in order to allow users to access the activity of the document and approval state from their workstations.

As per claim 8, Ouchi in view of Johnson in view of Creswell in view of Kao further disclose that a revision code of the document is registered in the database as part of the information about the document, and revision of the document is completed by an alteration of the revision code to a new revision code and addition of the revised document to the database, so that both the document having the new revision code and the document having the old revision code are retrievable (see Kao column 7, lines 22-39).

As per claim 13, Ouchi in view of Johnson in view of Creswell in view of Kao further disclose that the information registered on the database comprises the department which created the document and a scheduled date for revision of the document (see Kao Fig. 5), and the deadline management means, using the mailing means on the day of the revision, requests the department which created the document to revise the document (see Creswell column 4, lines 3-55).

As per claim 14, Ouchi in view of Johnson in view of Creswell in view of Kao further disclose that presence or absence of the read-through (Johnson see columns 3 and 4, lines 64-67 and 1-24, for read-through report) report is retrievable for each of the documents, users, departments, and periods of time (see Kao Fig. 4, where an audit trail of people who have read-through and approved a report is retrievable).

6. Claims 9,10,11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ouchi in view of Johnson in view of Creswell.

As per claim 9, although the system disclosed by Ouchi in view of Johnson in view of Creswell shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to disclose that information registered on the database comprises whether a paper document must be delivered to which of the departments, and for a department which needs a paper document, a notification of formal registration of a document is sent through the mailing means and a paper copy of the document is delivered as well.

Nonetheless, these features are well known in the art and would have been an obvious modification of the system disclosed by Ouchi in view of Johnson in view of Creswell.

Ouchi in view of Johnson in view of Creswell disclose a system to emulate paper based procedures (see Ouchi column 1, lines 29-35) making it obvious to allow a user to request a paper copy of a document along with the electronically emulated paper in case the electronic version is unclear and illegible. Putting the request in a database would have been obvious to one skilled in the art because it would supply information about a document (see Ouchi column 1, lines 29-35), and allow a deliverer to keep track of who is requesting the paper copies.

As per claim 10, although the system disclosed by Ouchi shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to disclose that information registered on the database comprises which of each of the departments requires a delivery of a paper document, and, upon abolition or revision of a document, from which, through the mailing means, return of an abolished or outdated version of a document is required.

Ouchi in view of Johnson in view of Creswell disclose a system to emulate paper based procedures (see Ouchi column 1, lines 29-35) making it obvious to allow a user to request a paper copy of a document along with the electronically emulated paper in case the electronic version is unclear and illegible. In considering the department which needs the paper document is requested, through the mailing means, to return the abolished or outdated version of the document, would have been obvious to a person skilled in the art for reason that the abolished or outdated version of the document would no longer be useful as the paper copy of the electronically mailed document.

As per claim 11, Ouchi in view of Johnson in view of Creswell further disclose that a deadline management means reminds, using the mailing means, the departments to return the outdated or abolished version of the document, if the document was not returned within a predetermined period where Creswell discloses a mail delivery system for processing mail messages and reminding a recipient of a mail message that requires acknowledgment by sending another message to the recipient (see column 4, lines 3-55).

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As per claim 12, Ouchi in view of Johnson in view of Creswell further disclose that it would have been obvious to put the information sent through the mailing means for approval of the document under the preliminary registration and the reminder for the approval, the notification to the department about the formal registration of a document and the reminder for the reception confirmation, the instruction to the user to read the registered document and the reminder for the read-through report, and the request to return the paper document and the reminder for the return of the document (discussed above) are stored and retrievable (see Ouchi column 1, lines 29-35, where Ouchi suggests that storing data in a database can provide information about a document).

7. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ouchi (US 5,978,836) further in view of Kao et al. (US 6,070,177), herein referred to as Kao, and in view of Johnson et al. (US 5,325,310), herein referred to as Johnson.

As per claim 3, Ouchi discloses a document management system comprising a database wherein the database comprises:

- a department master which stores a name of each department, with a department code, unique to each of the departments, as a key (see column 18, lines 62-66, where FIN is one of the department codes serving as a key);
- a user master which stores name, an e-mail address, and the department code of users, with a user ID unique to each of the users, as a key (see Fig. 25, and column 18, lines 11-66); While not specifically stated, it is implied that a name is associated with an e-mail address, and that an email address is a user ID unique to each user;
- an indexing number unique to the document serving as a key (see column 8, lines 13-31);
- a file table which stores a place of storage and a file name of the document, with the indexing number as a key (see column 8, lines 38-67);

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- an approval table which stores the user ID of an approver of the document and a date on which an approval was given by the approver, with the indexing number as a key (see column 11, lines 17-50);
- a delivery table which stores the department code of the department to which the document is to be delivered and a date on which a reception confirmation was supplied by the department (see column 18, lines 10-60), with the indexing number as a key (column 17, lines 5-28).

Although the system disclosed by Ouchi shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to disclose an index table, which stores a document title, the department code of the department which created the document, and a scheduled date of document revision.

Nonetheless, these features are well known in the art and would have been an obvious modification of the system disclosed by Ouchi, as evidenced by Kao.

In an analogous art, Kao discloses a document transmission system, which allows for a document to be distributed among a network of computers keeping track of the transmission and revision history, further showing an index table storing a documents title, a department code of the department, which created the document and a scheduled date of document revision (see Fig. 5).

Given the teaching of Kao, a person having ordinary skill in the art would have readily recognized the desirability and advantages of modifying Ouchi by employing specifics about a document, such as disclosed by Kao, in order to keep record of the people who are submitting the documents.

Although the system disclosed by Ouchi in view of Kao shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to disclose a tutorial record table which stores a date on which a tutorial is supplies, with the indexing number, the user ID of the user to receive the tutorial, and the document identified by the indexing number as keys.

Nonetheless, these features are well known in the art and would have been an obvious modification of the system disclosed by Ouchi, as evidenced by Johnson.

In an analogous art, Johnson discloses a mail delivery system for processing mail messages that require the recipient to read through the message and acknowledges the message reception (see

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columns 3 and 4, lines 64-67 and 1-24). Johnson further shows storing a date when the requirement to read the document is made. Ouchi's teaching of the indexing number and user ID of the user to receive a document provided makes it obvious to store along with the date the requirement is made.

Given the teaching of Johnson, a person having ordinary skill in the art would have readily recognized the desirability and advantages of modifying Ouchi by storing a date on which the requirement to read a document is made, such as disclosed by Johnson, in order to require employees to acknowledge critical messages that require a reply or confirmation and keep track of when these requirements are made.

8. Claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ouchi (US 5,978,836), and further in view of Kao et al. (US 6,070,177), herein referred to as Kao.

As per claim 15, Ouchi discloses a document management system comprising a database wherein the database comprises:

- a department master which stores a name of each department, with a department code, unique to each of the departments, as a key (see column 18, lines 62-66, where FIN is one of the department codes serving as a key);
- a user master which stores name, an e-mail address, and the department code of users, with a user ID unique to each of the users, as a key (see Fig. 25, and column 18, lines 11-66); While not specifically stated, it is implied that a name is associated with an e-mail address, and that an email address is a user ID unique to each user;
- an indexing number unique to the document serving as a key (see column 8, lines 13-31);
- a file table which stores a place of storage and a file name of the document, with the indexing number as a key (see column 8, lines 38-67);
- an approval table which stores the user ID of an approver of the document and a date on which an approval was given by the approver, with the indexing number as a key (see column 11, lines 17-50);

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- a delivery table which stores a date of reception confirmation made by the department to which the document has been delivered, with the indexing number and the department code of the department as keys (see column 18, lines 10-60), with the indexing number serving as a key (column 17, lines 5-28);
- a date of return from a department to which the document was delivered with the indexing number (see column 9, lines 28-35, and Fig 9. MOVE HISTORY TABLE).

Although the system disclosed by Ouchi shows substantial features of the claimed invention (discussed above), it fails to disclose an index table, which stores a document title, the department code of the department which created the document, and a scheduled date of document revision

a return table which stores, revision code, and the department code of the department as keys, wherein

a life cycle management of the document from approval and registration of the document when new, through revision, approval, and registration of a revised version of the document with the revision code, to return of the document when the document is abolished or when its revision code has been outdated, is provided.

Nonetheless, these features are well known in the art and would have been an obvious modification of the system disclosed by Ouchi, as evidenced by Kao.

In an analogous art, Kao discloses a document transmission system, which allows for a document to be distributed among a network of computers keeping track of the transmission and revision history, revision code, and department code serving as keys (see Fig. 4 and column 6, lines 59-64); wherein

management from approval and registration of a new document through revision, approval and registration of a revised version of the document handled with the revision code, to return the document when the document is abolished or when its revision code has been outdated is performed (see Fig. 7, and column 9, lines 29-61).

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Given the teaching of Kao, a person having ordinary skill in the art would have readily recognized the desirability and advantages of modifying Ouchi by employing specifics about a document, such as disclosed by Kao, in order to keep record of the people who are submitting the documents.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Philip J. Chea whose telephone number is 571-272-3951. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:00-4:30 (1st Friday Off).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenn Burgess can be reached on 571-272-3949. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Philip J Chea
Examiner
Art Unit 2153

PJC 4/29/05


KRISNA LIM
PRIMARY EXAMINER